

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 115
By Bone

A RESOLUTION to create a special joint committee to study the admission policies, curriculum, and academic mission of the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine.

WHEREAS, this state and nation are facing a shortage of large animal veterinarians that is reaching epidemic proportions; and

WHEREAS, this alarming shortage of large animal veterinarians to serve our essential agricultural communities has been occasioned by a transformation in the academic philosophies of veterinary schools across the nation, unfortunately including the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine; and

WHEREAS, due to social and economic factors, veterinary schools, through their admission policies, curriculum, and other academic standards and practices, emphasize the graduation of small animal veterinarians to serve urban and suburban areas to the great detriment of graduating large animal veterinarians to serve agricultural and other rural communities; and

WHEREAS, it is indeed sad to note that farm life is no longer the focus, or even a significant consideration, of the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine's curriculum, nor is it necessary to complete one undergraduate class in agriculture as a prerequisite to admission to such school, a trend that is prevalent in veterinary schools across the nation; and

WHEREAS, many aver that the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine overemphasizes academic performance at the undergraduate level in selecting students for its program, thus, in many instances, creating a bias against rural candidates who have more

practical experience in agriculture and far more interest in practicing as large animal veterinarians; and

WHEREAS, for whatever reasons, there are definitely fewer candidates from an agricultural background being accepted to the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine than there are students from non-agricultural backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, this appalling lack of veterinary students with practical experience in agriculture is definitely contributing to the critical shortage of large animal veterinarians; and

WHEREAS, this matter adversely affects Tennessee's agricultural communities, which are essential to this state's economy, and should be carefully and exhaustively studied by this General Assembly; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that there is hereby created a special joint committee to study the admission policies, curriculum, and academic mission of the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the focus of such study shall be to find ways and means:

- (1) to increase the number of students from rural and agricultural backgrounds accepted to the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine; and
- (2) to increase the number of graduates of the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine who ultimately practice as large animal veterinarians.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee shall consist of three (3) members of the House of Representatives and three (3) members of the Senate, to be appointed by the respective speakers. The Dean of the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the committee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the University of Tennessee and all appropriate state agencies shall provide assistance to the special joint committee upon request of the chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all legislative members of the special joint committee who are duly elected members of the General Assembly shall remain members of such

committee until the committee reports its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special joint committee shall be convened by the member with the most years of continuous service in the General Assembly, and at its first meeting shall elect a chair, vice-chair, and such other officers the committee deems necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special committee shall timely report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the One Hundred Fourth General Assembly no later than February 1, 2006, at which time the committee shall cease to exist.